[0028] Figure 8. The 54.2% amino acid homology between human Del-1 (SEQ ID NO: 21) and MFG-E8 (SEQ ID NO: 20) in the tandem discoidin I/factor VIII domains is shown. These domains are rich in the basic amino acids arginine and lysine. The 5′ domain contains 12 arginines and 12 lysines versus 9 acidic residues, while the 3′ domain contains 8 arginines and 10 lysines versus 16 acidic residues. A similar domain in the coagulation factor VIII protein is believed to bind to negatively charged phospholipids on the surface of platelets. The MFG-E8 protein has been found to associate tightly with milk fat globule membranes.

[0029] Figure 9. The predicted amino acid sequence at the amino terminus of the human Del-1 protein (SEQ ID NO: 22) shows characteristics common to signal peptides. The putative signal sequence of human Del-1 (SEQ ID NO: 22 from residues #3 to #21) begins with a basic arginine residue and is followed by a stretch of 18 amino acids rich in hydrophobic residues. Signal peptides typically end with a small amino acid such as glycine or alanine. In addition, the Chou and Fasman algorithm predicts that the putative signal sequence is followed by a protein turn structure, a feature commonly found after signal peptides. The Del-1 protein is secreted by expressing cells.

[0030] Figure 10. Sequence similarities between the three EGF-like domains of Del-1 (EGF-like domain of Del-1 (1): SEQ ID NO: 23; EGF-like domain of Del-1 (2): SEQ ID NO: 24; EGF-like domain of Del-1 (3): SEQ ID NO: 25) and homology with the consensus EGF-like domain amino acid sequence (CONSENSUS EGF DOMAIN: SEQ ID NO: 26). Also, the amino acid sequence RGD is in the center of the second EGF-like repeat. This sequence is found in a variety of extracellular matrix proteins and, in some cases is required for binding to integrin proteins. An RGD sequence is present in the same position in the second EGF-like repeat of MFG-E8.

[0031] Figure 11. Human *del-1* splicing variant partial sequence (Nucleotide sequence: SEQ ID NO: 27; amino acid sequence: SEQ ID NO: 31) showing the variation as compared with the major form (SEQ ID NO: 30).

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[0032] Figure 12A-~~12E~~ 12D. Murine *del-1* truncated minor nucleotide and deduced amino acid sequences (SEQ ID NO: 28) and (SEQ ID NO: 29).